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Katrina T. Holland

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PATENT

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Application of: Sting et al.

Group Art Unit: Not Assigned

Serial No.: Not Assigned

Examiner: Not Assigned

Filed: Herewith

Docket No.: 1370/14

For: ENVELOPE-FILLING STATION

* * * * *

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

Honorable Commissioner for Patents
BOX PATENT APPLICATION
Washington, D.C. 20231

Dear Sir:

Kindly amend the subject application as follows:

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please insert the paragraph heading on page 1, before line 5, as follows:

--Technical Field--

Please insert the paragraph heading on page 1, before line 7, as follows:

--Related Art--

Please insert the paragraph heading on page 1, before line 30, as follows:

--Summary of the Invention--

Please insert the paragraph heading on page 2, before line 9, as follows:

--Brief Description of the Drawings--

Please insert the paragraph heading on page 2, before line 27, as follows:

--Detailed Description of the Invention--.

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please insert the paragraph heading on page 12, before line 3, as follows:

--What is claimed is--.

Please amend claims 1 through 5 as follows:

1. (Amended) An envelope-filling station having an envelope-filling bench which is added onto a push-in station of a mail-processing machine, in which enclosures or sets of enclosures are conveyed into the push-in station by means of a conveyor and are pushed into envelopes by means of a push-in arrangement, said envelopes being conveyed by means of an envelope-conveying arrangement, on the envelope-filling bench, into a position opposite the push-in arrangement and being opened there and held ready for receiving the enclosures or sets of enclosures and, once filled, being conveyed further, wherein the envelope-conveying arrangement contains a circulating envelope-conveying belt, of which the top strand is guided over the envelope-filling bench and is oriented transversely to the push-in direction, in that a roller bar equipped with spring-mounted rollers can be lowered onto the top side of the top strand of the envelope-conveying belt, and raised from it, in a controlled manner, in that stop means are arranged along the top strand of the envelope-conveying belt and can be brought into an active position directly above the level of the envelope-filling bench, and removed therefrom into an inactive position, in a controlled manner, such that envelopes which have been conveyed up are brought to a standstill in a position opposite the push-in arrangement with the stop means active and with the roller bar lowered, are filled with the roller bar raised and are conveyed further with the stop means inactive and the roller bar lowered again, and in that at the beginning of the top strand of the envelope-conveying belt, by means of an auxiliary conveying arrangement, envelopes can be conveyed up separately against in particular adjustable stops from a horizontal direction perpendicular to the running direction of the top strand of the envelope-conveying belt, such that subregions of the respective envelope which has run up against the further stops extend into the gap between the raised roller bar and the beginning of the top strand of the envelope-conveying belt such that, when the roller bar is lowered against the top strand of the circulating envelope-conveying belt, the relevant envelope is drawn in front of the push-in arrangement in the conveying direction of said envelope-conveying belt.

2. (Amended) An envelope-filling station according to Claim 1, wherein the operation of feeding the separated envelopes out of an envelope-separating station from a horizontal direction perpendicular to the running direction of the top strand of the envelope-conveying belt takes place by means of an auxiliary conveying belt and abutment rollers or abutment belts interacting therewith.

3. (Amended) An envelope-filling station according to Claim 1, wherein the roller bar has a beam-like carrier housing which is coupled to drive means for raising and lowering it and on which spring tongues or pairs of leaf-spring elements are anchored, these retaining bearings for supporting on both sides the journals of disc-like, comparatively large-diameter rollers.

4. (Amended) An envelope-filling station according to Claim 3, wherein at least one of the spring tongues or leaf-spring pairs bears, on spring sections extending from the anchoring locations, starting from the bearings, suction-cup

arrangements which are connected to a vacuum source via flexible vacuum lines and controllable valves and of which the suction-cup openings, with the roller bar raised off from the top strand of the envelope-conveying belt, extend down at least to the level of the lowermost circumferential regions of the rollers, and with the roller bar lowered onto the top strand of the envelope-conveying belt and the rollers loaded, with spring-tongue deformation or leaf-spring deformation taking place in the process, are raised by way of the spring sections, above the level of the lowermost circumferential regions of the rollers, the suction-cup arrangement serving for opening and keeping open the envelopes during the actuation of the push-in arrangement.

5. (Amended) An envelope-filling station according to Claim 3, wherein the carrier housing of the roller bar and the spring tongues or leaf-spring pairs are designed in one piece, in particular as a plastic injection moulding.

IN THE ABSTRACT:

Please add the following after page 14 of the application:

--Abstract

An envelope-filling station having an envelope-filling bench which is added onto a push-in station of a mail-processing machine, in which enclosures or sets of enclosures are conveyed into the push-in station by a conveyor and are pushed into envelopes by a push-in arrangement. The envelopes are conveyed by an envelope-conveying arrangement, on the envelope-filling bench, into a position opposite the push-in arrangement and being opened there and held ready for receiving the enclosures or sets of enclosures. Once filled and conveyed further, the envelope-conveying arrangement contains a circulating envelope-conveying belt, of which the top strand is guided over the envelope-filling bench and is oriented transversely to the push-in direction, in that a roller bar equipped with spring-mounted rollers can be lowered onto the top side of the top strand of the envelope-conveying belt, and raised from it, in a controlled manner, in that stops are arranged along the top strand of the envelope-conveying belt and can be brought into an active position directly above the level of the envelope-filling bench, and removed therefrom into an inactive position, in a controlled manner, such that envelopes which have been conveyed up are brought to a standstill in a position opposite the push-in arrangement with the stops active and with the roller bar lowered, are filled with the roller bar raised and are conveyed further with the stops inactive and the roller bar lowered again, and in that at the beginning of the top strand of the envelope-conveying belt, by an auxiliary conveying arrangement, envelopes can be conveyed up separately against in particular adjustable stops from a horizontal direction perpendicular to the running direction of the top strand of the envelope-conveying belt. The subregions of the respective envelope which have run up against the further stops extend into the gap between the raised roller bar and the beginning of the top strand of the envelope-conveying belt such that, when the roller bar is lowered against the top strand of the circulating

envelope-conveying belt, the relevant envelope is drawn in front of the push-in arrangement in the conveying direction of the envelope-conveying belt.--

REMARKS

The amendments to the specification as set forth above are intended to clarify and set apart the various sections of the subject application.

The amendments to the claims as set forth above are intended to remove all multiple dependent claims from the subject application and to more particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject invention.

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the specification and claims 1 through 5, which illustrates all of the changes made to the specification and claims pursuant to 37 CFR §1.121. The attached page is captioned "Version With Markings To Show Changes Made". Deleted language is bracketed and added language is underlined.

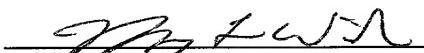
The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any deficiencies or credit any overpayments in connection with the filing of this correspondence to Deposit Account No. 50-0426.

Respectfully submitted,

JENKINS & WILSON, P.A.

Date: 29 March 2001

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1370/14

JLW/lsg

Serial No.: Not yet assigned

Version With Markings To Show Changes Made

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

The paragraph heading has been inserted on page 1, line 5, as follows:

Technical Field

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Related Art

The paragraph heading has been inserted on page 1, line 30, as follows:

Summary of the Invention

The paragraph heading has been inserted on page 2, before line 9, as follows:

Brief Description of the Drawings

The paragraph heading has been inserted on page 2, before line 27, as follows:

Detailed Description

IN THE CLAIMS:

The paragraph heading has been inserted on page 12, before line 3, as follows:

What is claimed is:

1. (Amended) An [E]envelope-filling station having an envelope-filling bench [(5)] which is added onto a push-in station [(2)] of a mail-processing machine, in which enclosures or sets of enclosures are conveyed into the push-in station [(2)] by means of a conveyor [(1)] and are pushed into envelopes [(30)] by means of a push-in arrangement [(3)], said envelopes being conveyed by means of an envelope-conveying arrangement [(4)], on the envelope-filling bench [(5)], into a position opposite the push-in arrangement [(3)] and being opened there and held ready for receiving the enclosures or sets of enclosures and, once filled, being conveyed further, [characterized in that] wherein the envelope-conveying arrangement [(4)] contains a circulating envelope-conveying belt [(6)], of which the top strand is guided over the envelope-filling bench [(5)] and is oriented transversely to the push-in direction, in that a roller bar [(10)] equipped with spring-mounted rollers [(13)] can be lowered onto the top side of the top strand of the envelope-conveying belt [(6)], and raised from it, in a controlled manner, in that stop means [(24)] are arranged along the top strand of the envelope-conveying belt and can be brought into an active position directly above the level of the envelope-filling bench, and removed therefrom into an inactive position, in a controlled manner, such that envelopes [(30)] which have been conveyed up are brought to a standstill in a position opposite the push-in arrangement [(3)] with the stop means [(24)] active and with the roller bar [(10)] lowered, are filled with the roller bar [(10)] raised and are conveyed further with the stop means [(24)] inactive and the roller bar [(10)] lowered again, and in that at the beginning of the top strand of the envelope-conveying belt [(6)], by means of an

auxiliary conveying arrangement [(14)], envelopes can be conveyed up separately against in particular adjustable stops [(23)] from a horizontal direction perpendicular to the running direction of the top strand of the envelope-conveying belt [(6)], such that subregions of the respective envelope which has run up against the further stops [(23)] extend into the gap between the raised roller bar [(10)] and the beginning of the top strand of the envelope-conveying belt [(6)] such that, when the roller bar [(10)] is lowered against the top strand of the circulating envelope-conveying belt [(6)], the relevant envelope is drawn in front of the push-in arrangement [(3)] in the conveying direction of said envelope-conveying belt.

2. (Amended) An [E]envelope-filling station according to Claim 1, [characterized in that] wherein the operation of feeding the separated envelopes [(30)] out of an envelope-separating station from a horizontal direction perpendicular to the running direction of the top strand of the envelope-conveying belt [(6)] takes place by means of an auxiliary conveying belt [(17)] and abutment rollers or abutment belts interacting therewith.

3. (Amended) An [E]envelope-filling station according to Claim 1 [or 2], [characterized in that] wherein the roller bar [(10)] has a beam-like carrier housing which is coupled to drive means [(11)] for raising and lowering it and on which spring tongues [(32)] or pairs of leaf-spring elements are anchored [(33)], these retaining bearings [(34)] for supporting on both sides the journals of disc-like, comparatively large-diameter rollers [(13)].

4. (Amended) An [E]envelope-filling station according to Claim 3, [characterized in that] wherein at least one of the spring tongues or leaf-spring pairs bears, on spring sections [(35)] extending from the anchoring locations [(33)], starting from the bearings [(34)], suction-cup arrangements [(36, 37)] which are connected to a vacuum source via flexible vacuum lines and controllable valves and of which the suction-cup openings, with the roller bar [(10)] raised off from the top strand of the envelope-conveying belt [(6)], extend down at least to the level of the lowermost circumferential regions of the rollers [(13)], and with the roller bar [(10)] lowered onto the top strand of the envelope-conveying belt [(6)] and the rollers [(13)] loaded, with spring-tongue deformation or leaf-spring deformation taking place in the process, are raised by way of the spring sections [(35)], above the level of the lowermost circumferential regions of the rollers [(13)], the suction-cup arrangement [(36, 37)] serving for opening and keeping open the envelopes during the actuation of the push-in arrangement [(3)].

5. (Amended) An [E]envelope-filling station according to Claim 3 [or 4], [characterized in that] wherein the carrier housing of the roller bar [(10)] and the spring tongues or leaf-spring pairs are designed in one piece, in particular as a plastic injection moulding.

A paragraph has been inserted after page 14 as follows:

Abstract

An envelope-filling station having an envelope-filling bench which is added onto a push-in station of a mail-processing machine, in which enclosures or sets of enclosures are conveyed into the push-in station by a conveyor and are pushed into envelopes by a push-in arrangement. The envelopes are conveyed by an envelope-conveying arrangement, on the envelope-filling bench, into a position opposite the push-in arrangement and being opened there and held ready for receiving the enclosures or sets of enclosures. Once filled and conveyed further, the envelope-conveying arrangement contains a circulating envelope-conveying belt, of which the top strand is guided over the envelope-filling bench and is oriented transversely to the push-in direction, in that a roller bar equipped with spring-mounted rollers can be lowered onto the top side of the top strand of the envelope-conveying belt, and raised from it, in a controlled manner, in that stops are arranged along the top strand of the envelope-conveying belt and can be brought into an active position directly above the level of the envelope-filling bench, and removed therefrom into an inactive position, in a controlled manner, such that envelopes which have been conveyed up are brought to a standstill in a position opposite the push-in arrangement with the stops active and with the roller bar lowered, are filled with the roller bar raised and are conveyed further with the stops inactive and the roller bar lowered again, and in that at the beginning of the top strand of the envelope-conveying belt, by an auxiliary conveying arrangement, envelopes can be conveyed up separately against in particular adjustable stops from a horizontal direction perpendicular to the running direction of the top strand of the envelope-conveying belt. The subregions of the respective envelope which have run up against the further stops extend into the gap between the raised roller bar and the beginning of the top strand of the envelope-conveying belt such that, when the roller bar is lowered against the top strand of the circulating envelope-conveying belt, the relevant envelope is drawn in front of the push-in arrangement in the conveying direction of the envelope-conveying belt.